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OES/ENV FOR DAVID BROWN

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TAGS: [SENV](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AR](#)
SUBJECT: ARGENTINA: FINAL NEGOTIATIONS ON STRATEGIC
APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT (SAICM)

REF: SECSTATE 11460

Classified By: Ambassador Lino Gutierrez, Reasons 1.4 B, D

¶1. (U) ESTHOFF delivered demarche points in reftel to Argentine MFA Environmental Counselor Miguel Hildmann, and, in a separate meeting, to Ministry of Health (MOH) Secretariat of the Environment officials Pablo Issaly and Lorenzo Videla on January 27, 2006. Both Hildmann and Issaly attended the September SAICM PrepCom3 meeting in Vienna.

¶2. (U) Hildmann told ESTHOFF that he will be the chief negotiator for the Argentine delegation at the upcoming meeting in Dubai, which will consist of Subsecretary of the Environment Luis Couyoupetrou, Secretary of Embassy Gonzalo Intenza, Issaly, and Norma Nudelman, an advisor from the University of Buenos Aires.

¶3. (C) Of particular concern to both MFA's Hildmann and MOH's Issaly was the Annex IV package compromise proposal that resulted from the Vienna meeting. Hildmann launched into a discussion of this topic immediately with ESTHOFF. Although his tone was cordial, he felt Annex IV was created by the USG and EU delegations at the eleventh hour without sufficient input from the rest of the G-77 nations, which he termed a "mistake." He told ESTHOFF that Argentina felt excluded from the decision and was not satisfied with the context of Annex IV.

¶4. (C) Hildmann said the GOA does not want to create a new organization as a result of SAICM. He is concerned that EU delegates plan to use SAICM to "destroy" the existing International Forum of Chemical Safety (IFCS), which the GOA wants to preserve. He added that the GOA favors better use of the existing international forums, does not want to create new financial commitments and feels this position is consistent with the USG view. He noted that Argentina pays more in UN assessments than 16 developed countries.

¶5. (C) Hildmann stated that the GOA supports the text agreed upon in Vienna as a base for negotiation as opposed to any rewording by the SAICM President. However, Issaly defended the changes as necessary in such areas as scheduling future meetings. He added that he feels there are too many brackets in important sections such as finances and that he expects "heavy discussion" in these areas.

¶6. (C) Hildmann said that Argentina does not believe it is necessary to reinterpret or expand upon the precaution standard and supports the general USG position. However, he said that the EU interpretation is "not terrible for Argentina" and Argentina will not oppose a consensus viewpoint that favors the EU proposal. In contrast, both Issaly and Videla strongly felt the precaution principle defined in Rio should not be reinterpreted at the SAICM meeting.

¶17. (C) Hildmann felt the scope of the agreement should not exclude food additives and pharmaceuticals, but acknowledged that they have a separate regulatory structure. He was unsure as to what form the wording should take and requested an informal side meeting in Dubai with the USG delegation to work out a consensus on the final wording. He emphasized that he did not want this discussion to take place at the plenary session. Issaly believed the SAICM President attempted to support the USG position with the changes she made. MOH's Videla said any SAICM agreement should stress that food additives and pharmaceuticals were already being regulated by public health sectors and should not be included in SAICM.

¶18. (U) Hildmann told ESTHOFF that although the USG philosophy on the savings clause sounded acceptable, he would like more information on the USG proposal, such as the actual text of the clause.

¶19. (C) In Hildmann's opinion, adopting the Global Plan of Action, (GPA), is the easiest way to prevent SAICM from being only a political declaration. However, he asked for more information on an alternative USG proposal for the GPA. He said SAICM should be considered an informal and non-binding mechanism. Issaly and Videla concurred, adding that they didn't support using SAICM as a vehicle for re-interpreting international agreements. Issaly said that he supported adopting in the GPA only items on which there is a total consensus. All other areas in the GPA should be "working areas" for future meetings.

¶10. (C) On several occasions, Hildmann emphasized his support for the existing IFCS and said that he felt the USG should support IFCS. He said he did not want to create a new

bureaucracy with the SAICM process and was interested in the USG vision of the future structure of SAICM, especially on such issues as governance and meeting schedules.

¶11. (C) Hildmann said he does not fully support the SAICM process and wants USG support instead for the continued viability of the IFCS. At one point he told ESTHOFF that if SAICM died, he would be "the first to celebrate." He was also concerned the USG would interpret the Argentine position as hostile. He told ESTHOFF that the GOA is "not the enemy" in this process and that the USG should not perceive the GOA as being on the opposite side. He is interested in talking with USG representatives and believes they can find a compromise solution to most issues.

¶12. (C) Comment: Both MFA's Hildmann and MOH's Issaly expressed dismay at the GOA's perceived exclusion from deliberations on the Annex IV package compromise proposal in Vienna and, since food additives and pharmaceuticals were excluded in Annex IV, this may be a factor in Hildmann's insistence on the discussion of food additives and pharmaceuticals in SAICM. Both Hildmann and Issaly expressed concern over future Argentine financial commitments. Note that Hildmann will transfer to Paris to serve as a member of the Argentine delegation to UNESCO shortly after the Dubai conference. Post believes that most of the differences between the MOH and MFA viewpoints will be resolved by the time of the Dubai conference. Since the MFA's Hildmann will be the chief negotiator, the final position is more likely to resemble the MFA position stated in this cable. End Comment.
GUTIERREZ